

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Claims 1-13 (Cancelled).

14. (Currently amended) A method of etching a wafer, comprising the steps of:

providing a wafer having a surface and edge areas;

dividing the surface of the wafer into positive areas and negative areas, the negative areas including the edge areas of the wafer;

providing the negative areas with a first passivation layer to protect the negative areas from a subsequent second etching process;

providing at least one of the positive areas with a second passivation layer having a thickness that is less than a thickness of the first passivation layer;

selectively removing the second passivation layer via a first etching process, the first etching process being terminated when the second passivation layer is completely removed;

subsequently etching the wafer via the second etching process; and

removing the first passivation layer.

15. (Previously added) The method according to claim 14, wherein the dividing step includes the sub-steps of:

applying a nitride layer; and

structuring the nitride layer using a photoresist technique, wherein the positive areas of the surface of the wafer are defined by a part of the surface covered with the nitride layer.

16. (Previously added) The method according to claim 15, further comprising the step of removing the nitride layer at least in subareas of the positive areas after the negative areas are provided with the first passivation layer and before the wafer is etched.

17. (Previously added) The method according to claim 15, wherein the structuring step includes a step of removing a photoresist at at least one of the edge areas after exposing the photoresist.

18. (Previously added) The method according to claim 17, wherein the photoresist is

removed after exposing and developing the photoresist.

19. (Currently amended) The method according to claim ~~18~~ 20, further comprising the step of applying the oxide layer in a LOCOS process.

20. (Currently amended) The method according to claim 14, wherein at least one of the first passivation layer and the second passivation layer includes an oxide layer.

21. (Previously added) The method according to claim 14, wherein the step of etching the wafer in the wet chemical etching process is performed so that at least one through hole is etched out.

22. (Previously added) The method according to claim 14, wherein the step of etching the wafer in the wet chemical etching process is performed so that a cavern area is formed in the vicinity of the at least one positive area provided with the second passivation layer.

23. (Previously added) The method according to claim 22, wherein the step of etching the wafer in the wet chemical etching process is performed so that at least one through hole is etched out.

24. (Previously added) The method according to claim 14, wherein the wafer is made of a single material.

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